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For Immediate Release
March 24, 2004

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Sen. Allen's legislation aiding Mackinac Straits Hospital approved by Health Policy Committee

LANSING – State Sen. Jason Allen, R-Traverse City, announced that Senate Bill 991, granting authority status to the Mackinac Straits Hospital Authority, was approved by the Senate Committee on Health Policy today.

“This legislation will provide a major impact on the quality of health care service available in the Upper Peninsula,” Allen said.

Sponsored by Allen, SB 991, would amend the Hospital Authority Act to allow for a group operating as an authority for more than 40 years to be considered an official authority.

“In order for Mackinac Straits Hospital to continue developing their new facility they need to be declared an authority so they can receive the necessary funds,” Allen said. “Mackinac Straits Hospital Authority has been serving the community for more than 40 years and it would be wrong for them to be penalized on a technicality.”

Recently when applying for a U.S.D.A. loan to construct a new facility, the hospital discovered that one of the townships belonging to the authority could not legally be proven to be a member. SB 991 would correct this problem and allow for Mackinac Straits Hospital to continue with their development.

“I am grateful that the state is acting to assist health care in the Upper Peninsula,” former Sen. Walter North said. “This legislation opens the door for us to develop a spectacular new facility in St. Ignace.”

The legislation will now go before the full Senate for a vote on the floor. Allen will be working with the House to keep things moving quickly in order to allow the hospital authority to receive the \$9 million loan from the U.S.D.A. as soon as possible.

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Editor's note: A photo of Sen. Allen, former Sen. Walter North and Mackinac Straits Hospital CEO Rod Nelson is available for download on the Senate Photowire:

<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/photowire/Allen/Allen.htm>